

Nutrient Management Update

NRCS

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NRCS Update

- 590 Nutrient Management Practice Standard
 - Revision process began in March 2013
 - June 2015 target for FINAL DRAFT standard
- Major changes to NRCS National Standard
 - Development of guidance for nutrient (manure) application on frozen/snow covered soils
 - Development of a nutrient risk assessment for Nitrogen (Nitrogen Index)
- Other edits requested by 590 users
- 590 Team minutes and agendas posted on the Standards Oversight Council website

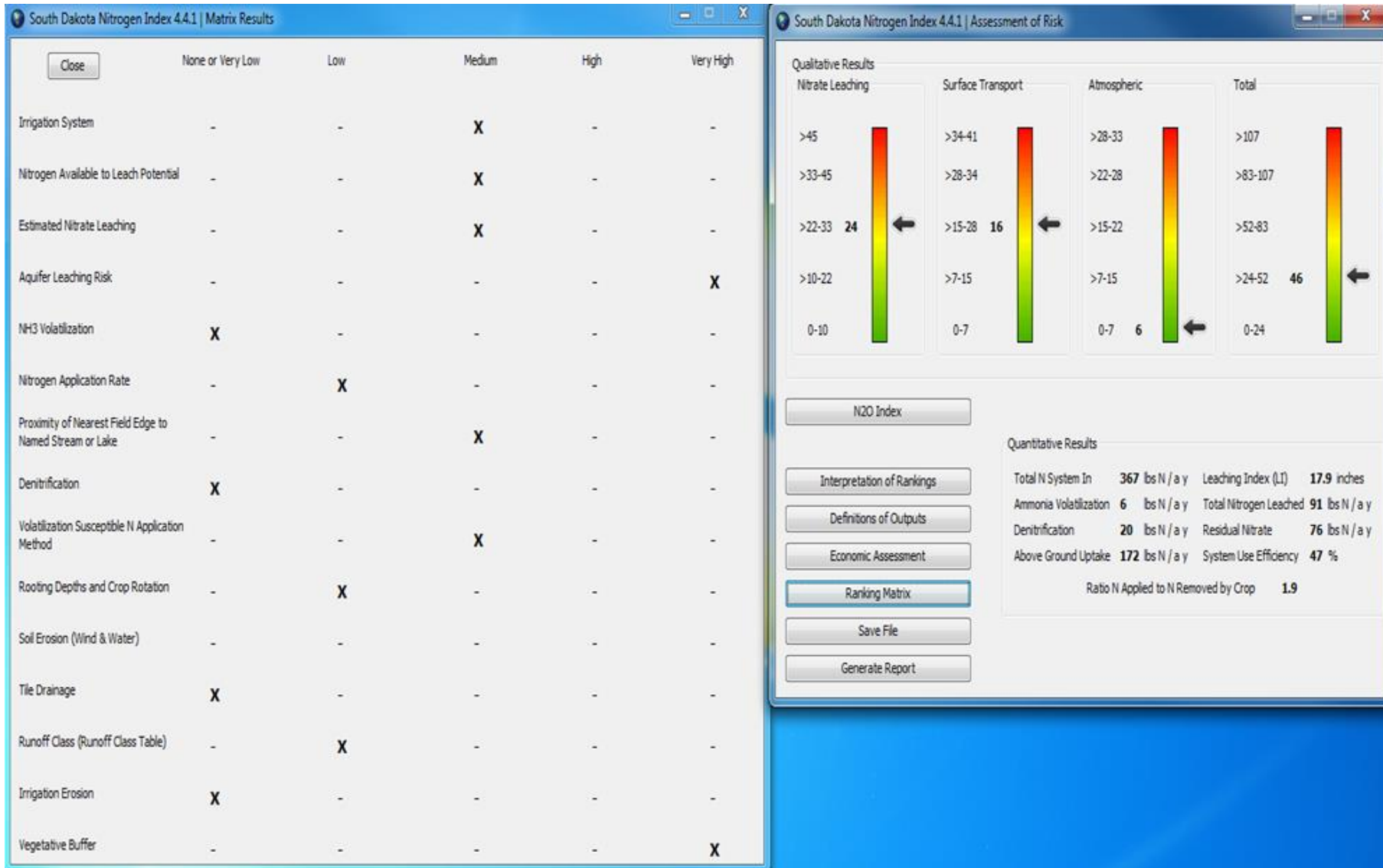
Winter Manure Application

- Current standard addresses winter application of manure:
 - V.A.2.b. Frozen and Snow Covered Ground
 - 2) locally identified areas in a conservation plan not currently utilized/well defined
 - New NRCS national 590 practice standard requires “approval by state water quality agency” for revised winter spreading restrictions

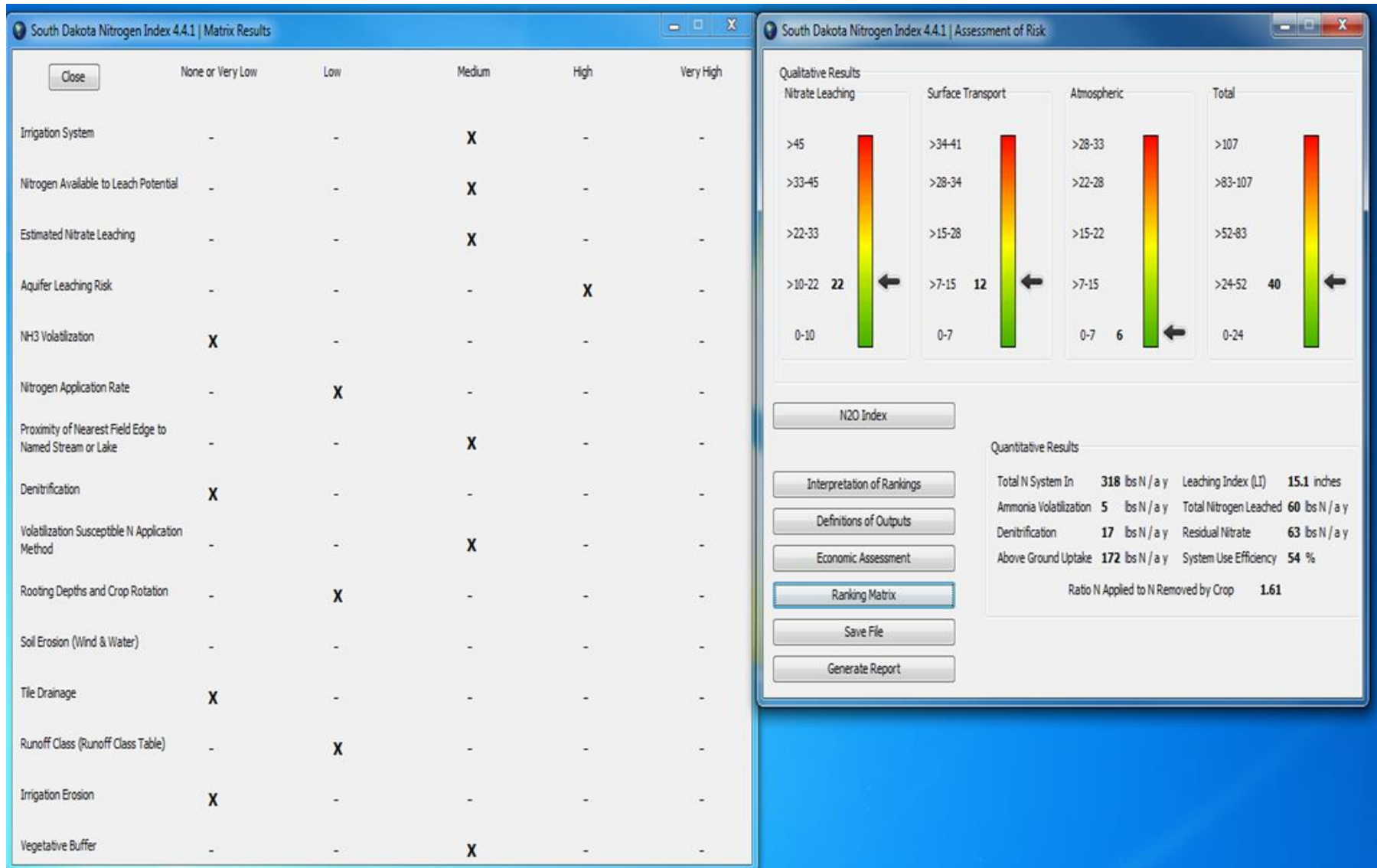
Nitrogen Index

- Quantitative balance of N inputs vs. removals
- Qualitative assessment of relative risk of uncaptured Nitrogen leaving the crop production system
 - Intended to estimate increases in Nitrogen capture by best management practices
 - Not intended to regulate use of Nitrogen (unable to accurately model season specific growing conditions and precipitation patterns)

Nitrogen Index (Before Management)



Nitrogen Index (After Management)



NRCS Update

- 590 Nutrient Management Plan Quality Assurance
 - In 2013 Wisconsin NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) contracts were reviewed by a national Oversight and Evaluation Team
 - FINDING: 590 plan must meet the NRCS practice standard to make financial assistance payment.
 - FINDING: NRCS must have enough documentation in the case file to document practice met the standard.

NRCS Update

- 590 NMP Quality Assurance continued....
 - FY-14 EQIP program participants will be given checklist to provide to their 590 planner
 - Basic 590 plan checklist ALL plans
 - Enhanced and Precision 590 only apply FY-14
 - NRCS payment can only be made on acres in full compliance with the 590 practice standard
 - FY-14 Financial Assistance payments are higher
 - 590 planners for EQIP funded contracts MUST be TechReg approved

NRCS Update

- Typical quality assurance issues for 590 plans:
 - Plan narrative and SNAP+ database not updated to reflect “actual as applied” data
 - P Management Strategy not declared
 - Soil Test minimum 1 sample per 5 acres
 - Calibration of manure application equipment not addressed
 - PI slope and distance to surface water not accurately entered
 - Field ID numbers/acreage not consistent

NRCS Update

- Typical quality assurance issues for 590 plans continued:
 - 50 setback from potable wells not consistently addressed
 - Supporting practices for nutrients applied in SWQMA not consistently identified
- Checklist “Enhanced” Nutrient Management
- Checklist “Precision” Nutrient Management

NRCS Update

- REMINDER: IF soil sampling for a 590 plan will be done PRIOR to the EQIP contract being signed the client MUST request a waiver through the NRCS District Conservationist
 - Soil sampling without a waiver is legally considered “commencing” a practice prior to the approval of the EQIP contract and will make the 590 plan INELIGIBLE for EQIP funding

NRCS Update

- SNAP+ vs. RUSLE2 Soil Loss Estimates
 - RUSLE2 is used for all NRCS conservation planning activities
 - SNAP+ is recognized as an erosion estimate and acceptable for 590
 - SNAP+ and RUSLE 2 ONLY estimate Sheet and Rill
 - DO NOT estimate wind or ephemeral erosion
 - SNAP+ utilizes a limited set of prepared tillage and crop rotations (use more aggressive tillage if exact tillage implement is NOT available)
 - RUSLE2 allows individual tillage implements to be added to each pass
 - RUSLE2 allows actual contour grade and design of contour buffer strips
 - Contour practices with greater than 2% actual slope marginal protection
 - Contour Buffer Strips minimum 15 feet wide/Contour Strips designed using RUSLE2 – $\frac{1}{2}$ critical design slope (2 strips min.)

NRCS Update

- Soil Health Initiative
 - Public/Private Sector acknowledgement of benefits of maintaining a green and growing cover on crop fields for as long as possible
 - Wisconsin NRCS Cover Crop (340) practice standard recommends higher seeding rates to enhance soil health benefits (EQIP funding levels reflect higher seeding rates)
 - Risk Management Agency no longer considers Cover Crops as a “crop” when defining double cropping IF NRCS termination deadlines are met
 - Terminate cover crop at or within 5 days after planting primary crop, but before crop emergence.
 - Harvest of cover crop for forage or first cutting of alfalfa prior to planting requires approval by crop insurance agent
 - Residue levels after harvest MUST meet the intent of the cover crop

NRCS Update

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - Pays farmers annually for conservation “enhancements”
 - Enhancements are more generalized activities than NRCS conservation practice standards
 - USDA has positioned CSP as a income enhancement to replace traditional farm programs
 - Farms with stable land base and minimal changes in crop rotations are best match
 - CSP renewed in 2014 Farm Bill

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- Renewed in 2014 Farm Bill (few changes)
- Financial Assistance Rates set MN, WI, MI
- 2014 Contract signing delayed by passage of Farm Bill (reassign financial “symbols”)
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for eligibility reduced to \$900,000 in new Farm Bill
- FY-15 EQIP sign-up closes 10/03/14.

NRCS Update

- Conservation Compliance
 - NRCS status reviews continue to find 10% of randomly selected tracts to have fields with soil erosion > 2T and/or ephemeral erosion present
 - Gully erosion – reoccur in same place/deeper than 4 inches
 - Ephemeral erosion – not in same place annually < 3 inches
 - New aerial imagery released to NRCS/FSA this winter clearly identifies unreported clearing of HEL and Wetlands. UPDATE AD-1026 with FSA
 - NRCS conservation programs, FSA loan programs and remaining dairy/crop programs subject to compliance eligibility requirements

NRCS Update

- New Farm Bill re-links Federal Crop Insurance benefits to HEL/Wetland Compliance
 - Federal Crop Insurance premium subsidy re-linked to Wetland/HEL Compliance as of 02/07/14
 - June 1, 2015 deadline for applicants to file/update AD-1026 with FSA for 2015 insurance year
 - Finding of non-compliance will last for 1 year and be subject to re-evaluation for each year
 - Sodbusted fields MUST be insured as a separate line per existing crop insurance regulations

NRCS Update

- Wetland Compliance
 - For Crop Insurance Only: only wetlands converted AFTER 02/07/14 are considered a violation (other programs/loans continue to use the 12/23/85 trigger date).
 - Prior program participants have 1 year to restore a wetland converted after 02/07/14
 - Non program participants have 2 years to restore a wetland converted after 02/07/14
 - A “one time” buy out of up to 5 acres of Converted Wetland was created by the law, details TBA

NRCS Update

- HEL Compliance
 - Crop Insurance participants will be included in the 2015 status review process
 - Prior program participants will have 2 years to develop and implement a conservations system
 - Non program participants will have 5 years to develop and implement a conservation system

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